Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 02707 071558Z

43
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 NEA-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /116 W
---------- 062205
P R 071540Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3298
INFO USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T ATHENS 2707

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, MCAP, PFOR, GR, TU
SUBJECT: PROJECTED GREEK MILITARY BUILDUP AND GRECO-TURKISH RELATIONSHIP

REF: ATHENS 2592

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO OSD AND TO EUCOM FOR POLAD

1. UNFORTUNATELY, RELIABLE INFORMATION INDICATES IOANNIDES CONSIDERS TURKEY THE MAIN MILITARY PROBLEM FACING GREECE AND THAT GREEK ARMED FORCES MUST BE MILITARILY PREPARED FOR A POSSIBLE, AND EVEN LIKELY, MILITARY SHOWDOWN WITH TURKEY OVER THE AEGEAN. CYPRUS IN SOME WAY COULD ALSO GET INVOLVED IN THIS PROCESS. THE GREEK ARMED FORCES APPEAR TO BE ENGAGED IN DEEP MILITARY PLANNING FOR ALL EVENTUALITIES IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH TURKEY. TURKEY'S REACTION IS NOT UNPREDICTABLE. WE ARE VERY LIKELY AT THE BEGINNING OF AN ARMS RACE BETWEEN THESE TWO ALLIES.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION, AT RECEPTION EMBASSY RESIDENCE MAY 3, GENERAL PAPANICOLAOU CONFIRMED GOG NEGOTIATING WITH FRENCH FOR MIRAGES. OTHER RELIABLE SOURCE INDICATES POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF 125 AMX-30 TANKS ALSO UNDER NEGOTIATION. PAPANICOLAOU SAID GOG DETERMINED TO MAKE UP FOR MISTAKES OF LAST TEN YEARS NOT ONLY IN AIR FORCE BUT ALSO ARMY AND NAVY. ADMIRAL ARAPAKIS TOLD
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 02707 071558Z

AMBASSADOR EVENING BEFORE THAT HE HAD MONEY FOR THREE NEW SHIPS

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

AND HOPED THEY COULD BE PROCURED IN U.S. HE SAID AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE, IT WAS ONLY RIGHT THAT GREECE NOW THAT IT WAS SPENDING ITS OWN MONEY SHOULD PROCURE IN THE U.S. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, ARAPAKIS STATED THAT HN WILL BUY FROM FRANCE FOUR MISSILE GUNBOATS OF 420 TONS DISPLACEMENT AT ATTRACTIVE PRICE OF $19 MILLION EACH.

3. AS DEPT IS AWARE, THE IOANNIDES REGIME IS NOW DETERMINED TO ALLOCATE SUBSTANTIAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO MODERNIZE ITS ARMED FORCES, WHATEVER THE IMPACT IN THE CIVILIAN ECONOMY. THERE IS ALSO GOOD EVIDENCE THAT IOANNIDES IS PREPARED TO STAKE HIS FUTURE ON THIS ISSUE. THUS, RECOURSE TO THE FRENCH, WHO PAPANICOLAOU CONFIRMS ARE PREPARED TO OFFER VERY GENEROUS CREDIT TERMS (7.5 PER CENT INTEREST AND VERY LONG TERMS REPAYMENTS) SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING.

4. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING, USG WOULD DO WELL TO GIVE GREATER ATTENTION AND MORE URGENT PRIORITY TO POSSIBILITY OF A REAL CRISIS DEVELOPING IN RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY. SUCH A CRISIS COULD DAMAGE SERIOUSLY THE INTEGRITY OF THE SOUTHERN FLANK OF NATO AND OUR SECURITY POSTURE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.
TASCA

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED EUCOM.

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